

water heater, pressure and temperature (PT), relief valve

Question: I am having trouble with my water heater pressure/temperature relief valve. When I start up the water heater, and it runs for 5 minutes, the relief valve starts dripping and then shooting out water. I have an Atwood model G6A-8E heater.

Atwood PT (Pressure and Temperature) relief valve.



(This safety valve releases water (and thus relieves pressure) if either the temperature or pressure in the tank gets too high.)

If a customer's PT valve is weeping, it does not mean it requires replacing. They may have lost the "air space" at the top of the tank. The air space is needed as a "shock absorber" and to allow some expansion of the water as it heats up. Over time the air will be lost through the hot water that you use for dishes or bathing, also do not be tempted to lift the lever on the water valve while under pressure as this is another way air is lost.

Follow the steps below to restore the air space in the top of water heater tank:

- 1- Disconnect power to the water heater and let cool down.
- 2- Shut off the water pump and/or disconnect from city water supply.
- 3- Open the hot water faucet closest to the water heater.
- 4- Open the pressure relief valve and remain open until the water stops flowing.
- 5- Close the pressure relief valve.
- 6- Turn on the pump and/or city water. Continue to leave faucet open until the water flows freely without air.
- 7- Close faucet.

Excessive temperature

Another cause of the valve weeping is excessive temperature. Use a thermometer and measure the temperature of the water coming out of the faucet. If the temperature exceeds the standard operating temperature, the thermostat may be at fault instead of the P&T relief valve. If the valve weeps and the water temperature is less than the P&T relief valve rating, the air pocket may be gone. If the air pocket is restored and the valve still weeps, even with cold water, replacement of the valve is necessary.

When visiting dealers, I commonly see many PT valves being replaced; while some valves are indeed defective, many are not!

So the answer is: Before changing the valve, just try draining some water out (follow above procedure) of the water heater to restore the air pocket because the required air pocket may have gone away. Without the air